

SECRETARY: Mrs. C. Martindale  
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## *Editorial.....*

Some considerable dusting of archives and researching of material in the resources room at the museum was necessary to achieve this edition of your Newsletter. I hope that you will find something of interest to you. Should you have any particular subject on which you would like more information our researchers would be pleased to delve into the archives - or perhaps you have interesting items to share. I would be pleased to include them in future numbers. Responses to letters will, I am sure, result in articles later.

A query about Puddingstones resulted in an interesting research and the genealogical questions reveal some details not generally known.

We thank those members who were able to make available copies of Hatfield and its People. The possibility of good photocopies is being investigated for those issues not currently available.

It is noted that a re-union of former pupils who attended St. Audrey's School between 1950 and 1954 is being held at the Hatfield Social Club on May 2nd. Details are obtainable from Margaret Burgess (01707 262171) or from Ted Collie (01707 322530).

Don't forget the AGM which will be held on Monday 12th May at 7.30 pm.

## **100 YEARS AGO**

I came to Hatfield in 1903 to work in the county surveyor's office, which is now occupied by the police. It will be noticed that the date 1906 is on a tablet over the front door. In that year the attic was removed, another storey added and the attic replaced. In 1903 the only telephone was a line into the adjoining police station, the building was lighted by gas, and the typewriters were of the invisible type so that to see what was written the carriage had to be lifted. In 1906 communication between the two floors was by means of tubes let into the walls with whistles and mouthpieces at each end. The staff numbered only eight. At that time the county council had only four departments: the clerk's at Hertford, the surveyor's at Hatfield, the treasurer's at St. Albans and the accountant's in London. In the following year the county council became responsible for education.

In old Hatfield most of the shops were in Fore Street and Park Street. Brewery Hill was without shops but with a delightful smell of brewing, and masses of white foam would lie on the road. There were so many pubs it was a wonder they all made a living.

Banking facilities were very scarce. Once a week officials would come from Barclays Bank at Hitchin and do their business for a few hours. Then they would retire to the Salisbury, kept by Jock Har-

vey, for a substantial 1/- lunch.

The Great North Road through Hatfield had a gravelled surface, and on it I saw for the first time a lady cyclist in bloomers, who created quite a stir. There were many more roadmen than now. I do not know why, as the pay was very poor: 12/- per week (foremen got 16/-). The first experiment in tarring roads was carried out at Stanborough - just a spreading of tar with gravel on top - and we had many claims from cyclists who had skidded and ruined their clothing.

The statue at the entrance to the park was erected about 1904, the marquess having died in 1903. There was an official unveiling, with a wonderful tea at the house.

At the station was a royal waiting room (still existing), and I once saw the Prince of Wales arrive for a visit to Bocket Hall, where he was taken by carriage and pair. Fares were very cheap, 1/7d return to London, 1/3d evening return. The biggest bargain was the 3/- Sunday trip to Skegness from Kings Cross.

When I look at Hatfield now all these events seem but a dream.

E. WALLER.

Cecil Crescent, Hatfield.

## **PUDDINGSTONE**

Hertfordshire Puddingstone is a naturally occurring rock which, as its name suggests, is common to Hertfordshire, although it is also found to a lesser degree and in smaller quantities in West Essex, parts of Middlesex, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

In appearance it resembles an old fashioned plum pudding, its rounded pebbles resembling the plums or currants.

It is a rock valued by lapidarists for its patterns and colouring when polished. Archaeologists and historians associate it with tool manufacture and route-markers, farmers curse it for the damage it does to ploughs as do civil engineers for its untimely appearance in building foundation excavations.

For centuries Hertfordshire Puddingstone has become an integral part of the folklore of Hertfordshire as is shown by the many alternative names such as "Growing Stone", "Breeding Stone" and "Angel Stone".

### **CHARACTERISTICS**

- Puddingstone is found in blocks scattered over the Hertfordshire countryside, ranging in size from less than 10cms across to large boulders over 2m across. It is only very rarely found as bed-rock in situ.

It is renowned for its extreme hardness. This results from cementation of the pebbles with silica. If a puddingstone cracks the split will usually occur across the very tough flint pebbles because the cement is even harder. Nearly all the flint pebbles are oval in shape with a diameter of 0.5 to 5cms. Mineral impurities in the pebbles give a variety of colours, black, brown, red, yellow, pink orange etc. and sometimes they exhibit colour banding. The matrix

between the pebbles is also variable in colour.

- Bradenham Puddingstone occurs in Buckinghamshire at Bradenham near High Wycombe. It has small, brown angular flint chips instead of rounded flint pebbles.

### **FORMATION**

- Hertfordshire Puddingstone is a sedimentary rock of the type known as conglomerate. It probably originates in the Reading Beds; deposits of sands, clays and pebbly gravels which were laid down around 54 million years ago.

At this time practically the whole of Britain was dry land covered by a deep layer of chalk which had been deposited on the sea bed 20 million years earlier. Part of the south-east was a giant estuary where sands and clays were brought by many rivers flowing from land to the west, north-west and north. Flint nodules in the chalk were removed by the river and rounded to form pebbles as they were carried along.

Millions of years later the sea retreated and the estuary became dry land. In places water containing silica in solution percolated up through the beds of sand and cemented them into a very hard sandstone known as sarsen. Where bands of flint pebbles occurred in the sands the silica solution cemented the material into the hard conglomerate we now call puddingstone.

Eventually weathering and glacial action exposed, eroded and transported the sarsen and puddingstone and scattered boulders and fragments over much of the landscape north of the Thames.

Blocks of sarsen were used to build parts of Stonehenge and Avebury Rings.

*From "Pebbles and Puddingstones"  
produced by St. Albans Museum*

## **TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES OF HATFIELD - 4**

### **TEXTILES AND FULLING**

Cloth making in Hatfield had rather a short history. In 1608, the then Lord Salisbury, who had only recently taken up his estate at Hatfield, made an agreement with Walter Morrell of Enfield that he would take fifty apprentices from among the people at Hatfield and teach them how to spin, weave, card and generally make cloth. Lord Salisbury provided half a barn, some farm land and the site for a fulling mill, which later became the paper mill at Bush Hall Lane.

Fulling is the method of cleaning and softening cloth by beating it in water. Hammers driven by water power were used to beat the cloth in large vats of liquid. Despite his good intentions, poor Walter was doomed to failure, his scheme lost money and the man who was at that time miller in the cornmill, Luke Rawson, took Walter Morrell to the Manor Court four times between 1608 and 1633, complaining that the fulling mill was a nuisance and used up the water power he needed to grind corn.

In 1638, Lord Salisbury leased the fulling mill to Edward Arris from London, and the cloth industry there ceased.

Based upon articles written by Susan  
Harrison for the Hatfield and District  
Archaeological Society

### **FILM EXCHANGE**

The recent publication of 'Cinemas of Hertfordshire' reminded David Willson of Maisie Parrott (nee Mardling) who collected films after their showing at the Public Hall and took them, on the Luton Line, to W.G.C. where they were exchanged for those just shown at the Welwyn theatre, returning with these in time for the second half of the Hatfield bill.

## **THE OAK BUREAU**

W. M. L. Escombe

After Lord Mountstephen's death in Lemsford, there was a sale of the contents of Brocket Hall. It was a very large sale and lasted five days in March 1923. Prices were very high. I believe a pair of Louis XV commodes fetched 15,000 guineas.

I was living at Stanborough at that time, and I went over on one of the view days to see if there was any small piece of old furniture which I might care to bid for. In one of the servants' attics I found a small oak bureau. It was quite plain and in poor condition, covered with ink stains, and with the feet badly damaged. The period was early eighteenth century, and the lot was the last one on, I think, the fourth day of the sale.

### **Made it guineas**

As I could not go to the actual sale I instructed Mr. E. T. Tingey, of Hatfield, to bid up to £10 for me. I told a friend of mine about it, and he was standing beside Mr. Tingey when the bidding started. It happened that Mr. Tingey got off on the wrong foot and was run up to £9/10/-. My friend had asked him if he was bidding for me and up to what limit, so when someone else bid £10 my friend said he was sure I would spring another ten shillings. Mr Tingey made it guineas and the lot was knocked down to him.

### **Label on playing card**

He rang me up in the evening and told me what had happened, and I told him to take the bureau to his shop and have it repaired. A few days later he rang me up again and said that when the bureau was turned upside-down they

found an old label tacked on the bottom. This label, written in faded ink, read as follows

"For Master Lambe at ye Revd. Mr. Hilsleys, Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

To go by ye hatfield waggon from ye Golden Lion and Cross-keys in St.Jno. St. from ye Swan with 2 necks."

Later I temporarily removed the label to photograph it and found it was the back of a playing card, the six of hearts.

Mark Hildesley was born on December 9, 1698, and was educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took his M.A. degree in 1724. He was instituted at Hitchin on February 24, 1731, and married the same year. He incurred great expense in improving the vicarage house, and to augment his income took six pupils as boarders. In 1735 he was presented by Ralph Radcliffe to the rectory of Holwell, Bedfordshire.

Sir Matthew Lambe (or Lamb) was born in 1705. He was educated to the law and called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn. His father was an attorney of Southwell and legal adviser to the Cokes of Melbourne Hall. On the death of his uncle - Peniston - in 1734 he inherited a considerable fortune. He married in 1740 Miss Charlotte Coke, and on the death of her brother in 1751 he inherited Melbourne Hall. Previously in 1746 he had purchased Brocket Hall from representatives of Sir Thomas Willington. He was created a baronet in 1755. He had three children, of whom Peniston succeeded to the title. The other two were daughters - Charlotte and Anne. Peniston was created Baron Melbourne of Kilmore in 1770. His son was William (1779-

1848), the celebrated Lord Melbourne who was Prime Minister in 1834 (six months) and again from 1835-41. William's sister married Earl Cowper, and after his death married Lord Palmerston, who was Prime Minister 1855-8 and 1858-65, in which year he died at Brocket.

When going over Brocket Hall at the time of the sale, I remember a long row of old-fashioned bells in the servants' quarters, two of which were labelled "Lord Melbourne's Room" and "Lord Palmerston's Room."

Writing to me in 1923, the late Mr. Harry Daniell, a well-known Hertfordshire antiquarian whom I had consulted on the matter, concluded " There is little doubt but that this desk was sent down to young Matthew Lamb while he was a pupil of Hildesley's and that in due course it passed into Brocket Hall when its owner acquired the property in 1746, and there it remained ever since. Letters are extant between Hildesley and his pupil (Matthew) Lamb, but I have not yet been able to trace them." Unfortunately he was unable to do so before his death. A recent attempt on my part has also failed.

Matthew Lamb would have been twenty-six in 1731, and it may be thought that he would scarcely have been a pupil at that age. The letters would show if in fact it was he or some other member of the family.

In due course the bureau was delivered to my house, which abutted on to the Great North Road, and as I used to sit at it writing my letters I would picture it, then no doubt fresh from the cabinet makers, rumbling past in a wagon *en route* to Hitchin nearly 200 years ago.

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### BLACKSMITH REMEMBERED

Mr. Gunn, blacksmith of Pond Hill (later renamed Batterdale) had the forge next to Triangle House where Dr. Brittain held his surgery. The room over the farrier's forge was used at the turn of the century for a meeting place for the 14th Herts. Cadet Company and later for the 1st Hatfield Wolf Cub Pack. Mr. Gunn lived at No. 2 Stonecross Road, Hatfield.

Our picture shows the doorway to the forge in the right foreground. Thanks to those members who responded to the query.



### WHO WERE THEY?

This photograph of local amateur musicians was found among a bundle recently donated to the museum. We would like to identify the personnel and occasion before adding it to the archive. Can you help?

## Letters .....

*Burgess Hill  
West Sussex*

I am researching my family history, my mother and grandmother were both born in Hatfield.

My great-grandfather (George Rolph) worked for the Great North Railway. Can you tell me when Whitewash Alley became Railway Cottages and whether the road later became Endymion Road.

Great-Grandfather was involved in a railway accident losing his arm. Are there any records regarding this?

My Grandfather was in the army stationed in Hatfield Park in 1915. Do you know what regiments were there?

My great-uncle (Herbert Rolph) worked for Lord Salisbury as a gardener and later as gatekeeper at the Lodge opposite the station.

I hope you can help with my research.

*Jenny Flack*

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*Norwich  
Norfolk*

*And Tollgate Farm, Colney Heath*

I am trying to obtain a copy of a small booklet, published I think in the 1960s which described various farms in the Parish.

My interest is in Harpsfield Hall, demolished in the 1920s when my great uncle sold it to de Havillands. Whilst our records are very good on the whole, I have very few pictures or photographs of the former hall itself.

Any assistance from your members would be appreciated.

*L.F.C.Sinclair*

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